

[P.457-B]

Teklum

682 epidemic (two cases), when people have drunk
[755] a great deal and their motive is fresh in their
[273] mind.

682 The settings in which homicides occur indi-
152 cate that a killer is expressing not his own
154 bravery but rather his fears. Wounds are fre-
[273] quently inflicted from the rear, and often the
victim is outnumbered and set upon by a
group. The victim is sometimes invited to
drink with his killer(s), and in this session he is
disarmed psychologically and physically. Al-
cohol reduces the chance of his effective reac-
tion, and this is important when a knife or
machete is used. Shotgun killings are done at a
distance and do not require this tactic, al-
though it may still be employed. For drinking
serves to reduce the killer's own fears. Drink
"heats the blood" and makes unusual be-
havior possible. One killer, in recounting his
act, was not trying to prove bravery, but
rather his own good judgment and cool-head-
edness. The killer fired at the victim while he
was sleeping, his back turned to the door, and
killed him. The shot also entered the arm of the
sleeping man's wife. She saw the killer as he
left the scene, but testified in court that she
had seen no one. She was, in effect, accepting
his verdict that her husband was a witch.⁴ This
homicide was not regarded by the killer or by
anyone else as a heroic act, nor was the killer
in recounting it attempting to emphasize
anything other than the necessity of the act.

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Instrumentality: Weapons and Wounds

gun....	14
machete.....	6
gun and machete..	4
knife.....	3
knife and gun.....	1
knife and machete.....	1
knife and stone.....	1
hatchet.....	1
nail.....	1
sandals.....	1
??.....	4

The variety of weapons reduces the question
of any technological determinism to a mini-
mum. The actual weapon used seems to be a
matter of convenience. When more than one is
used, it is usually evidence that the assailant
had helpers. The nail is unusual. It was ham-
mered into the jaws of a man who had entered
the curing profession at an age considered too
young. The attack on the jaws of the victim
seems related to the power of speech and to the
[text continues on p. 461-B]

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291 shorts are also usually embroidered in red and yellow. The chief had
[123] such a pair, very fine and gaudy, which we asked to see. He took
[293] them off to show us, but when we tried to buy them from him he
became furiously angry and abusive. Sandals, when worn, are of
the ordinary type. Most of the Indians carry a staff of some kind.

[531] The women wear the typical blue skirt, but the blouse, cut like
a poncho, is usually tucked inside and heavily embroidered about the
neck and shoulders. This work takes a long time, and the finished

blouses are valued very highly. When worn outside they nearly cover the skirts, which are just knee length. Red sashes with a yellow stripe from Tapachula, of the kind worn also around Ocosingo, bind the skirts at the waist. Hair is done in two braids with dark red ribbon, or tied up in a knot over the forehead as at Cancuc.

Men and women alike wear cheap, gay-coloured necklaces, usually rosaries.

The Indians move with great freedom through the town and lounge in company with the Ladinos on the broad porch of the Town Hall. The officials are distinguished by silver-headed canes with black tassels. In lieu of a Maestro, they are directly under the Ladino *Presidente Municipal*, and their disputes are tried by the local judge. Their lawsuits have a mediaeval air, carried on publicly



FIG. 236.—Tenejapa, Chis. Indians in the street.

with great clamor on the Town Hall porch, and all concerned speaking with the utmost freedom. A breach of promise case was observed in the course of trial. It went on for at least two hours with never less than two Indians, usually women, speaking at once. One could not but admire the patience of the rather bored and indifferent judge.

114 The cargadores from Cancuc arrived shortly after dark, still lively despite the long day and steep climb. More remarkable still,

273* leads the prayers in the church (the rezadora) had two anonymous
626 notes left at her door, asserting that her character was incom-
578 patible with such a role. The effect of this accusation was
sufficiently strong to cause her to withdraw from her position.
She and her family tried to discover who the note writers were.
Under these circumstances it was not long before a few candidates
for this position were being considered.

273* Rules of evidence for finding the performers of anonymous
626 acts are quite relaxed, though sufficient to the task from the
578 community's point of view. The successful anonymous act is not
seen by anyone, hence the reconstruction of the act is made on
the basis of motives, and on the succeeding acts which the al-
legedly guilty person may display. Furthermore, there may be
special characteristics of the act which restrict the number of
those who may be guilty. If, for example, a man is known to
have been killed with a pistol, the assassin is conceded to be
limited to one of those who is known to have a pistol. In the
present case, a note was written in Spanish, and the author was
hence limited to that handful of individuals in the community
who can write Spanish. Mariano is perhaps one of the best
Spanish writers in the community.

He further damned himself by saying while drunk that he
wrote and delivered the note. In this text, he is talking with
the rezadora who was forced out of her job, with the full knowledge

273* that she has heard that he made these remarks while drunk and
• 695 knows that he writes Spanish well. He constructs a conversation
626 for her between himself and one Augustin (who also writes
578 Spanish) in which Augustin asks him if he did in fact write the
threatening note, as he had claimed in Augustin's presence to
have done. (Mariano never admits himself that he made these re-
marks while drinking.)

273* HTAH BA SOK Z'IN HAL *AWSTIN I.
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539 Later I met Augustin.
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*ILI ME HIC ME YUN HAT Z'IN LA *APAS HUN I, XYUTON.

"Is it true that you wrote the note?" he asked me.

TU*UN XKUT.

"Why?" I asked him.

HA*BI *AY LA *AWAL TA *AYAKBEL XCI, LA AWAL TA *AYAKBEL *ILI,
HO*N LA HPAS HUN I, HO*N LA KAK^o HIL TO *AK'EL HIL TA STI*
SNA XCIAT.

"Once when you were drunk you said so," he said, "You said,
'I wrote the note, I sent it to her house,' that's what you
said," he said.

TU*N BA* LA HTA HBAHTIK XKUT.

"Where did we meet?" I asked him.

*AY LA HTA HBAHTIK TA YAKBEL, HO*N LA HPAS XCAT.

"Once we were drinking together, 'I did it,' you said."

*AYIL C'A*EAN MA HNA* MAC'A LA SPAS *EHK ABI, MA HA*KAT LA
*APAS XKUTAT STUK HO*N E.

"Stop it, be quiet, I don't know who did that. You didn't
do it," I said."

273*
578 ing strategies outside the court (murder or threat of murder)
[692] when the jeopardy involves a death.

Patterns of drinking in the expression
of and the resolution of conflict

Two sets of circumstances in which drinking occurs in the course of the settlement of conflict can be distinguished. First, there are those circumstances in which conflict is to be bound; that is, reduced as the basis for further inference and action. The second set of circumstances is that in which the conflict is to be escalated; that is, in which individuals are going to engage in aggressive acts in order to reduce their perceived state of jeopardy. We will exemplify the first set of
273*
578 circumstances by discussing the role of aguardiente in the settlement of cases in court. We will exemplify the second set of circumstances by discussing the role of alcohol in the performances which lead to anonymous assassination in that circumstance where consensus is that the man to be murdered is a witch.

*
273 The settlement of conflict in court
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The process of settling conflicts under the direction of the ayuntamiento is mutually exclusive with required or mandatory drinking performances. However, once the conflict has been settled, the interaction between the members of the ayuntamiento and some, if not all, of the parties of the dis-

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pute cannot be terminated until drinking has taken place. Search procedures used by the court such as testimony, the cross-examination of witnesses, the handling of material evidence, debating points of law, none of these are thought to operate at all well unless the parties to the dispute, and the court, are sober.

It is nonetheless the case that the court often entertains a set of disputants while one or more of the relevant parties is substantially intoxicated. For informal drinking is so usual that at least some of the members of the set of those who will participate in the conflict settlement are drunk. Furthermore, it appears to be the case that sometimes an individual who does not wish to be bound by the court's decision and the public certification of the conflict will use drunkenness as a strategy to delay the proceedings. Under such circumstances, the court will initiate the proceedings, but will drag them out over a period of several days so that individuals who were drunk initially will have the opportunity to sober up. In turn, individuals who are drinking for other purposes, for example, to delay the trial, will be separated out and their behavior sanctioned. Sometimes they will be sent off, and the decision made without the benefit of their presence.

To sum this up, we may say then, that the parties to the conflict and the court must remain sober. Court outcomes are

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6: Metzger E-5 (no date) 1964 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Aguacatenango

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• 695 dependent on a most careful and detailed examination of the conditions under which the conflict was originally generated as they are concerned in reaching a decision which fairly expresses the variable jeopardy that each party could reasonably be held accountable for vis-à-vis the other party. In the circumstances that any of the three parties to the conflict are drunk, the case will be postponed, or if it is not postponed it will be considered void, to be retried or else appealed to another court.

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593 There are a few kinds of circumstances in which drinking during the course of conflict settlement is seen to be appropriate though optional to the parties concerned. The type of case is best exemplified by circumstances where a daughter, say, is known by her family to have been promiscuous previous to the trial, and where they are being called by the daughter's husband or suitor to account for their daughter's behavior. In such circumstances the parents of the girl will appear at court. During the trial, each of them will publicly whip the girl. In such a case, where a male parent is certain of his daughter's misbehavior, he may drink aguardiente so as to reduce his feelings of shame at having the affairs of his daughter made public, and, as a result having to whip her. The mother does not drink in these circumstances, the proscription on women drinking being so strong as to prevent her from indulging in this shame-reducing behavior.

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Drinking is characteristic in court settlement once the outcome has been decided. One or both parties to the dispute will present one to five liters of aguardiente to the ayuntamiento who with the parties will drink it up, the aguardiente being equally distributed among all persons present, the relative order of drinking being that described in Chapter II.

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While interpretations of the "meaning of drinking" in the terminal period of the settlement of a dispute are by and large speculative, we may observe that such drinking appears to signal that the role relationships specific to the dispute are now dissolved. That is, the court no longer judges, and the disputants are no longer in jeopardy with reference to each other. Rather it is the case that the relationships between those involved have been returned to their pre-conflict state. The enduring relationships between the individuals previous to the conflict again hold. It should also be observed that the gift to the ayuntamiento of aguardiente is a form of payment for having mediated the dispute.

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Drinking performances in conflict settlement can be easily identified as either ceremonial or informal. The ceremonial drinking expression following conflict settlement begins with the presentation of the aguardiente to the ayuntamiento by one of the parties to the dispute. The ceremonial drinking segment terminates when this aguardiente has been drunk up by those present. Addi-

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695 tional informal drinking segments may follow, but they will not necessarily take place on the cabildo porch, and the group may break up, so that drinking is simultaneously going on in two or three settings. All informal drinking rules hold from then on. The normal drinking performance following dispute settlement includes ceremonial drinking plus informal drinking segments which lead to drunkenness. The probability of this is expressed in text where an elder warns the wives of town officers that their husbands will sometimes return home drunk (see Chapter V for citation of text).

The escalation of conflict

273*
578 In the case where conflict is to be "settled" by in-
731 creasing the jeopardy of the other party, aguardiente is supplied by the individuals who are interested in escalating the conflict. The aguardiente is supplied during the time when the conflict is "settled" rather than afterwards. Such a case is described in
578 text as follows:
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529 K'ALAL LINX K'OP E YUN SKA CAMEL SARANPIA YUN BAYAL XCAM
*ALALETIK.

The fighting began because many children were dying of measles.

HA* SLINKIL K'OP *ABI HTINK' WINIKETIK LA SNOF SK'OPIK, YUN
LA *OCEN CAMEL IA TENKLIM.

The action began in the beginning because a group of men got together to talk about who had put the illness in town.

342 party to go to the spring, at least one relative remains in the house to
 596 greet the soul if it should precede the curing party.
 584 Behavior in household rituals is described in Chapters 1, 5, and 8.
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THE CABILDO

344 The cabildo, called by the people of the town the "cold house,"¹ was
 196 built following the revolution of 1915, when Piñeda's revolutionary soldiers
 175 destroyed the original colonial structure. The tiles of the roof were confiscated from a finca which the Indians invaded in 1941 in an unsuccessful attempt to gain additional lands. When they were unable to maintain their hold on the land, they burned the owner's house and took the tiles to the town center where they remain as a symbol of their defiant action. They refer to this event with pride. The cabildo houses the jail, equipped with a barred wooden door, in one of its wings, and the Ejido Commission office in the other.

344 Within the cabildo, each official has his established place. The cabildo is
 352 furnished with a table at which the president and síndico sit on wooden
 621 chairs made in the Indian town of Chamula. Four benches lining the
 554 walls on either side of the entry provide seating for the civil officials. On
 576 the right side (looking out at the plaza) sit the judges in order of rank;
 693 the regidores, in similar sequence follow them. The principales, and formerly the alfereses, sit on the left side when they appear for ceremonial occasions. This spatial allocation establishes drinking and greeting order as well. Visitors can go directly from one to another in the formal greeting of a handclasp and murmured "good morning, father," or "good afternoon, father," without violating age-respect patterns.

344 During court cases, the claimant and his supporters sit on the bench to
 352 the left of the door; on other occasions the bench is occupied by visitors or
 695 petitioners. The police sit on one of the two benches lining the outside
 625 wall, or retire to the kitchen, a wooden slat lean-to on the left wing of the

[171] 1. Bunzel (1952) notes that in prayers, the cabildo in Chichicastenango is referred to as "the cold house, the icy house." Although the Quiché term is not given in her manuscript, one can see a similarity in the rhyming couplets and metaphorical allusions in the prayers of the towns.

Ordering Behavior by Places

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building. When they leave the cabildo, they take their staffs as a mark of office.

The central room serves as a courthouse, a place for legislating and administering town affairs, for performing marriages, recording births and deaths, and for inaugurating new officials. Everyone who goes to the courthouse has a specific purpose for being there. Regular attendance means that an established seat and place in the order of greeting and drinking is accorded—even to the anthropologist.

Each day the civil officials assemble at the town hall about eight in the morning and take their accustomed places. Sitting is an official act. In listing the duties of the president, for example, "sitting at the table" was given first in order of importance of his functions by two informants, and in the case of the judges, "sitting at the bench" was listed first.

The president opens official mail and dictates responses to the secretary, now an Indian of the village, who pecks out the letters on an ancient portable typewriter. Since typing is a new skill for him, he makes many errors, and his retrials are accepted with patience and sometimes joking by the president and judges. When the president has an order for the police, it is transmitted to the regidor, who in turn passes it on to the police. The police always carry out their orders in pairs. Interruptions occur as petitioners enter. Men come in to announce the birth of a child and receive the name of the saint's day from the president, who consults the calendar; creditors arrive to request that a debtor be jailed for nonpayment of a loan or interest. When official visitors arrive from the I.N.I. or from the Ejido Commission, the president usually rises and stands at attention, agreeing with everything said. If it is an affair of some importance, the discussion may be continued in the schoolhouse, since the teacher has gained political importance in the town. The Indians rarely oppose departmental or federal officials directly; when they are unwilling to comply with an order, they stall for time, figuring that in the long run time is with them.

When the cabildo serves as a courtroom, it provides a setting for airing not only the grievance which precipitated the court action, but also the entire spectrum of personal relations involved. More women than men resort to court, since the drinking customs for men mean that they are more often the violators of norms. Behavior in the courtroom is controlled by a

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- 695 minimum of explicit rules. Very little is ruled out of order, and almost nothing introduced is considered irrelevant. The dialogue is primarily between the judge and claimant and secondarily between judge and defendant. The rural judges join with the regidores, who act as court clerks when a case is heard, in a kind of Greek chorus when consensus is reached regarding statements made by defendant or claimant. The judges indicate clearly their approval or disapproval of the statements being made, and throughout the case, consensual verdicts are made in an apparently spontaneous manner. No one pretends to be impartial. Personal knowledge of the defendant or claimant is introduced into the case.

[693] Courtroom behavior falls into three major acts: (1) the declaration by the claimant, (2) the questioning of the defendant (literally the "taking of the heart"), and (3) the paying of the fine. The judge introduces the first act by asking the claimant to "come and speak" so that they can "listen and hear." This ends formally with the claimant saying, "Good day, Elder Brother." The judge introduces the second act when he turns to the defendant, who stands before the civil officials, and says, "Speak and we shall listen, boy. What goes with you?" The defendant sums up his defense in the questioning period. The president introduces the final act, telling the defendant, "When you give a little fine you will be free."

[641] Both claimant and defendant pay court fees, an acknowledgment of the feeling that both are guilty because they are involved in a dispute. Before [273] the term of the incumbent president began, this was paid in two liters of [178] illegally distilled liquor, a kind of symbolic defiance of federal law. Now, since the president drinks only beer, it is paid in two family-sized bottles of beer. The etiquette of courtroom drinking is prescribed: the bottle, referred to as *smahtan*, or gift, is passed to the judge, who goes to the president and presents it to him with a few words of the *pat'o'tan* giving thanks for the gift. The fourth regidor then measures out the liquor, giving the first shot to the president, the next to the first judge and so on around the room. If a large fine is paid by the defendant, the president orders the police to buy meat, and a "common meal" is prepared and eaten.

[244] In this society, there are neither veniremen nor specialized advocates. 693 Civil officials other than the first judge act as jurors, announcing their 695 sentiments in unison. The judge, rather than handing down a decision, sums up the consensus of the group. Kinsmen of the claimant and defendant act

Ordering Behavior by Places

399

as lawyers. The defendant is sometimes accompanied by supporters who feel that he has a case. The failure of parents to accompany a defendant, regardless of his age, is attributed to their shame over their child's misbehavior and their own failure to train him properly. The judge does not limit himself to passing judgment but also counsels the defendant as to how he should behave. [693] [695] [593]

The town hall is usually shut and locked at noon unless some business requires more time. In the evening about six, the officials return to take their same posts. They sit with their arms drawn inside their woolen jackets for warmth. After a half an hour they drift home. People rely on the presence of officials rather than particular actions to maintain social control, and it is their appearance at regular hours that assures the villagers that the town is being well run. [521] [344] [56] [826]

Local autonomy depends primarily on retaining social control functions. Civil officials try to settle disputes locally and avoid the entry of Ladino officials from the departmental capital, although the judges and president will threaten the defendant with taking the case to the department if they cannot get compliance. The number of cases referred to the capital has been increasing since 1950 as Table 32 shows. In 1951 the federal government began to fine local officials who failed to report homicide cases and accidental death. The local officials complied, but departmental courts were unable to bring action in over half the cases. No action was taken in 72 cases, or 54 percent, in comparison with 62 cases, or 46 percent, in which action was taken. Domestic cases, except for one of adultery, are adequately handled in local courts and do not appear in the departmental records. The trend shows an increasing number of cases of crimes against persons in comparison to crimes against property, an index to the breakdown in social control processes. [621] [692] [631] [674] [82]

THE CHURCH

The church has been built and on two occasions rebuilt—when the tower was struck by lightning—with funds collected locally from household heads. Damage to the church was attributed to the patron saint of the neighboring town of Oxchuk who, the people say, was fighting with their patroness, Santa Lucía. The townspeople feel that they own the [346] [794] [821] [796]

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 301)

Appendix

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Mariano took out cigarettes, and the group relaxed as all lit up the cigarettes and smoked. They discussed my tape recorder as they listened to the tape replayed. When they came to the section that did not record well, they decided that they should take it out and urinate on it. One man suggested that they should put it in prison, and another said that they should shoot it. This provoked general laughter. They went on to discuss the smoking habits of Ladinos. Pablo remarked that Ladino lawyers do nothing but sit in their offices and talk and smoke. Mariano and Victorio's father joked a great deal, the latter maintaining that Pablo had threatened to castrate him. This was picked up by Pablo who said that then Mariano would be a *madrina* to his godmother, Martina (the woman speaker in the betrothal negotiations). This provoked a great deal of laughter among the women. They then joked with Mariano about Pablo's other *madrina*, a Ladina from the neighboring town who sells the blood of slaughtered bulls. They refer to her as *me? Squisoo*, the fat one. Mariano remarked to the women that Victorio's father must be a witch, and someone would try to kill him on the road. The conversation turned from the danger of going alone in the woods to a discussion of hunting. Feliciano bragged that he had an excellent hunting dog which he bought from a Ladino and which he referred to as "the Ladino dog." Mariano asked what Ladino they bought it from, but Feliciano denied knowledge of who the man was. They suggested it was nothing but a Huastecan Indian who changed his clothing. The joking and drinking continued until midnight, when the assembled company finally broke up. The next day Alberta went to live with her husband in the new house he had built.

B. COURT ARRANGEMENT OF SEPARATION

Persons present:

Judge
 Father of Plaintiff
 Mother of Plaintiff
 Plaintiff
 Husband of Plaintiff
 Regidor
 President

This case concerns a husband who had been separated from his wife and wished a settlement so that she would return to him. The man had been married before, and he occasionally returned to his first wife. When he got drunk,

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- 695 he announced on the loudspeaker of the cantina that he was a poor man who
593 had to maintain two wives. This caused embarrassment to his second wife,
578 who asked for the hearing in order to separate from him. He was working in
586 the sawmill and had not provided for her support. The text is a translation of
the transcription of a tape recording in Tzeltal.

695 Judge [to father of Plaintiff]: *Come, Mam compadre, and give evidence of what*
593 *has happened.*

578 Father: *This isn't the first time he has left his wife. It would be different, Mam*
586 *compadre, if he had only left her once, but he has left her several times.*

126 Judge: *Why do you keep on leaving her and coming back? It would be better*
to get her out of your system once and for all.

Mother: *He goes to his mother's house but then comes back just to fight.*

Judge: *You ought to stop your fighting when you go to your wife.*

Father: *So is it, Mam judge. If it had just been a few words or one visit, but*
he is always coming here to fight. Even if you drink, you should speak well
when you come to our house.

Plaintiff: *He said he had nothing to eat but dry tortillas. I said to him, 'Go*
heat your tortillas. You're going to have to live like a woman if you get rid of
your wife. Who is going to watch for you at the gate since I no longer intend
to? There is nothing to eat in the house because there isn't any money.'

Judge: *She says this because she is angry.*

Mother: *She speaks because she isn't a fool. He can't answer that.*

Judge: *They are still young, but they will learn. Also, he ought not to continue*
drinking.

Mother: *He doesn't obey me. Eight days later, and he repeats the same abuse.*

Judge [to husband]: *Why do you want to do this?*

Husband: *I want a woman who takes good care of me.*

Father: *Does his wife have a lover, that she leaves the house uncared for?*

Husband: *We're fighting because she is always going off to my mother-in-law's*
house.

Plaintiff: *Every time he gets drunk, he comes shouting. Why shouldn't I leave*
so that the child doesn't see us fighting?

Husband: *I get drunk because of the fighting. If there wasn't any fighting I*
would just want a soda.

Plaintiff: *Who wants that? There wouldn't be any fighting if you didn't come.*

Mother: *God can say that we don't want the embarrassment. I said, 'Stop fight-*
ing. It isn't good. She doesn't give you tortillas or atole because you are always

Appendix

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fighting. You ought to speak in sobriety. Why do you always want to fight and argue?"

Plaintiff: At first it was the fault of a little board. For the crime of giving my mother a little piece of wood I had to come here the first time [refers to dispute arising over some wood which plaintiff had lent or given to her mother, and for which Husband wanted money].

Mother: I am supporting the children he comes and "asks for" [refers to the fact that husband impregnates wife, and then does not support the family]. The child cried a great deal when we were inside the cabildo. It was I who had to feed him. Why would I want this, my compadre judges? A husband who leaves you

Father: How is the child going to grow up? And he keeps asking for another one.

Mother: You treat your wife like a mule, like a horse when you go to work. When I asked him to get some wood, he said, "Have I turned into your husband? Don't tell me what to do."

Plaintiff: If he gave something it would be good, but he never has supported me or even pays anything when he comes here.

Mother: He is never coming back to our house. We have spoken to the Ladino [Ramon, the former secretary who wrote out the marriage act]. We went to San Cristóbal to see what they would say. [Speaking to husband] But you don't listen to what he told you. You don't pay any attention because you are a devil. What good is it for us to go up to San Cristóbal?

Father: You should go, but you go on fighting as you started.

Judge: [to husband]: You should stay sober.

Mother: If he came to me sober, I would give him atole or sodas, Mam compadre. I returned the little board he had lent me, but he broke it.

Plaintiff: I gave him money for some soap, but he never gave account of that.

Judge: Now are you going to go with him?

Plaintiff: I am never going to go with him, elder brother. Even if he says he wants to take me back to his house, because I am not in his heart.

Judge: Ah, no. Let us explain.

Mother: Do you want to hear worse? No one is going to stay just to cook tortillas.

Father: It would be good, compadre, if she split with him.

Judge: They cannot split up because they are married.

Father: Well, compadre, if they [husband's family] take her back, then I am not going to return here. I am going to have to go to San Cristóbal.

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695 Regidor: *What has been arranged isn't good. There are small children, and he*
593 *cannot support them.*

578 Judge: *But what else can they do, compadre? Better go to the man's house and*
586 *make a fire there [a metaphorical allusion to acting as a wife in keeping the*
126 *home fires burning].*

Plaintiff: *Although you speak to him, he doesn't listen. He never listened to*
his father.

Husband: *What do you want to bring up my dead father for? He never or-*
dered me, nor has any other person.

Plaintiff: *I am not a fool. You gave me a wound, you broke my tooth. We*
want to stop all this and finish with the trouble you cause.

Mother: *Let's come to some understanding. If it is only the trouble with the*
board, then I will give him the money and see if it is what he says.

Judge: *This is not good, my compadre. It isn't going to content your heart.*

Mother: *I want to return and take out the marriage paper. It was Don Ramon*
who married them.

Judge: *It isn't good for you to go do that. We are trying to arrange things*
here. The president has charge of the archives.

Plaintiff: *He told me he was angry. I said, "Why do you want to sell the*
boards?" [This refers to the wood she had lent her mother.] He said, "I am
going to bring more." I asked him again why he wanted to sell the boards. He
said he had received money for them. He asked me where the boards were,
and I said I had lent them to my mother. "Go get them if you want them," I
said. He never gave me back the payment for the soap that I gave him. He
spent it for liquor. I said to him, "Where is the soap?" and he said, "I spent it
on liquor." When he gets drunk, he begins to fight me. He doesn't want me to
talk back, but what does he expect? He said he was going to get another wife,
that I was very lazy and very slack. I told him, "Why don't you go out and cut
some wood?" He said, "Where do you think I am going to get some wood?" I
was ashamed to go before my brother-in-law with my child and ask him. He
never wanted to cut wood or ocote.

Judge: *It is not good what he did. He should do what is necessary in the*
house.

Plaintiff: *It is for this reason that I don't want to go with him, Mam Judge.*
He is always saying that his first wife was a very good worker. If I didn't have
a husband or if there were no children, I would bring the wood, but I am not
going to do it while he is around.

Judge: *What would you say if he brought you back to his house?*

Appendix

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Plaintiff: *But I don't want it. What does he want me for? You heard him say I am a whore. He said I was a bitch. He said, "You are an old shit!" I don't want to have anything to do with him. What does he want me for if I am an old whore as he says? He said she [first wife] was a better woman than I.*

Father: *The judge told him before, "Go give your wife some support." We had three settlements before this. Mam Ramon said he was sick of seeing the woman in court so often.*

Judge: *First we will try to settle things here, and if he doesn't go in accord with custom, then you can go up to San Cristóbal.*

Father: *Here me, Mam judges, everyone fights occasionally, maybe makes two or three trips to court. But every time he gets drunk, he looks for a fight. I told him to stop fighting, but he doesn't listen. If I let my daughter go with him, he just takes her and produces more children. I have always had to support her then. He doesn't come around either drunk or sober. If he had come and told me what her fault was, then it would be good. When I had asked him what sins she had committed, he didn't say anything.*

Husband: *She just told me, "Leave me here and you go with your mother. I shall go back to my house."*

Plaintiff: *I left word with him that I was finished because of all the fighting. I don't want to go with a drunkard. [To husband] Even if you drink, you shouldn't beat me.*

Judge: *If you want a woman, you ought to support her. You shouldn't fight.*

Husband: *She told me, "You aren't the only man in the world. There are plenty of men who would want me."*

Plaintiff: *I never said that! You're looking for a fight!*

Husband: *What do you mean you didn't say that? My mother heard it.*

Plaintiff: *Go bring your mother. She didn't want to come because she is ashamed. It isn't the first time we are settling things in court.*

Judge: *You ought to go with him this time, but if it happens again, we will split you up. What else can we do if you don't obey our advice?*

Father: *When he goes to work, Mam compadre, he ought to look and see how much pay he is getting and how it will stretch to support his wife. Then she will make his tortillas for him contentedly, and there won't be any fighting.*

Judge: *We say that when he comes home from work he should ask his wife what she wants to spend for coffee or salt and all the things she will have to buy.*

Plaintiff: *He doesn't give any account of his little pay.*

Husband: *I don't want to say how much there is because there are still debts*

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- 695 from when I was asking for her [refers to betrothal expenses]. When the debt
593 is paid off, then I can.

578 Judge [to wife]: You heard that he will have to pay off the debt. Now go
586 with your husband in one heart. [To husband] Go with your wife. If you have
126 enough money, ask your wife if she needs some coffee or if she needs salt and
wants the payment of it. You have to give some money in order to live content-
edly.

Father: So it is, Mam compadre. It is good to be content and see the fire in the
hearth. One time he came to my house and I said, "Come in. Let's take a look
at what money you have earned." I told him to go save his money, give it to
his wife to keep it for him. That is what I said to him.

Regidor: And it wasn't to deceive him. It would be good if he would believe
[obey] this advice. They have been paying him double because he is a labor
agent.

Judge [to father]: So it is, Mam compadre. Let it rest there.

Regidor [to husband]: The day after tomorrow, don't come back here with a
couple more children and say you don't want her. Go back to your mother's
house. You are lucky to have a wife. If you don't have a wife, you go get
drunk every day. But with a wife life is good. She will give you coffee and corn
to eat. Don't go on fighting when drunk or sober. Both my compadres have
advised you [refers to judges].

Mother: So it is, Mam compadre. I am going now, Mam compadre. [Rises and
leaves].

Judge: Go then, my compadre.

The father and the husband give money for the fourth regidor to buy beer,
and the group of men sit and drink the two family-size bottles which are pur-
chased.